

MACAULAY'S CHARACTER OF JAMES II

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the House of Commons, (where every man hath liberty of speech) he may hear such reasons as he could never imagine for or against the same/ ¹

Naturally these answers did not satisfy the King any more than they would modern electors. Accordingly it rained dismissals. But even when corporations had filled with dissenters, wherever there was any semblance of a popular vote at all the Church party was too strong for them, and it became clear that the royal nominees had very little chance. ' The Dissenters are firm for us/ reported the government candidate for Bedford in December 1687, ' but the Churchmen are implacable against us/ ²

Nowhere can the change in public opinion be better traced than in the University of Oxford, thanks to Anthony Wood's diary. Macaulay had before him only an abridged version. In The Life and Times of Anthony Wood³ are many additional facts illustrating the process by which loyalty was transformed into rebellion. At the beginning of James's reign, Oxford was all exuberant loyalty. The proclamation and his coronation were celebrated with bon-fires, illuminations, and, as Wood says, * great extraordinary in eating and drinking in each college/⁴ Early in 1686 came the first signs of a change of heart. In March Obadiah Walker, the Master of University College, de-

clared his conversion to Roman Catholicism,
and in August
opened his chapel for public mass. Rioting
began almost
at once, and Walker became a byword to all—¹
Obadiah
Ave Maria/ In January 1687 Wood noted that
"he hath the
curses of all, both great and small/ There was
similar dis-

¹ Duckett, iL 48, 68.

^s Ibid. p. 61.

³ Edited for the Oxford Historical Society by Andrew
Clark (5 **vote.**;
1891).

⁴ iii. 144.